PEASANT MOVEMENT IN THE WEST PUNJAB (PAKISTAN) (1947-58)

***Muhammad Waris Awan**
****Rehana Iqbal**

ABSTRACT

Current paper analyses the formation, contribution and importance of Punjab Peasant Movement in social and political sectors of the province. The internal and external constraints in the development of the Peasant Movement have been examined. In this regard the challenges to the Movement in the form of actions of governments, religious leaders and the local Zamindars who acted to create hurdles in the development of the Movement need to be explored. The paper thus marks how the affiliations of the peasants with the Movement that could contribute to its success were wasted because the weak leadership could not transform it into highly result oriented struggle, as initially envisaged by the founders of the movement. The incapability of the leadership in respect of the organization of the Movement was also examined. Current study is exploratory and descriptive in nature, where the conclusions have been drawn on the basis of interviews conducted with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and the relevant literature has been reviewed for the purpose.

***Keywords**: Peasant, Kissan, Punjab, Pakistan.*

INTRODUCTION

This paper is a subaltern study of the history of the Peasant Movement is Punjab that was started in 1937 by the establishment of Punjab Kissan Committee (PKC) to safeguard the rights and interests of the peasants of the province. It was very active until the partition of India in 1947. However, this movement could not increase its influence and membership in the Muslim dominated areas of the Western and the Southern Punjab. In Pakistan, the gap of inequality created by feudalism has badly influenced the

* Assistant Professor, Department of History and Pakistan Studies, University of Sargodha, Sargodha (Pakistan)
** Subject Specialist (Pakistan Studies). Govt. Girls Higher Secondary School Chak # 88 SB (Sargodha).

political and social systems in several ways, promoting violence and intolerance in the political culture of Pakistan. After the partition, the problems of the peasants were neglected by the federal and provincial Governments. As a result of the deprivation faced by the rural community of Punjab, the revolutionary movement was bound to start. The Punjab Peasant Movement, with the help of Punjab Kissan Committee played a remarkable role to free the peasantry from landlords. It faced severe confrontation from the government as well as the landlords, whose interests were to suffer. The Peasants of the Punjab were not properly organized, class conscious, trained and guided in a suitable manner.

The Foundation of the Movement

After the establishment of Pakistan, Ch. Atta Ullah Jahania was appointed as the first Muslim General Secretary of PKC for the task of increasing the influence and membership of PKC in these areas. He, in spite of having a successful track record of organizing such movements, failed to increase the membership of the Muslim in PKC. As explained by Abid Hassan Minto, the wide influence of the Muslim landlords was a big problem in mobilizing the Muslim peasant.[1]But after the division of Punjab includes many other problems, the issue of refugee settlement and evacuee property badly affected the working of Kissan Committee in the province because of the high handedness of the

[1] Interview with Abid Hassan Minto (April 04, 2008). Abid Hassan Minto was born in 1932 in Rawalpindi in a well-educated Kashmiri family. He started his efforts for the promotion of leftist ideology from the plateform of Democratic Students Federation in 1949s its co-founder and in the same year he accepted membership of Communist Party of Pakistan. His role in Progressive Writers Association (a leftwing literary organization established in 1936) is worth remembering in literary circles. He closely worked with Kissan Committees and veteran leftwing Kissan leader Ch. Fateh Muhammad. He made his mark in trade unions as well. He has successfully organized many processions and protests of workers from the leftwing plateform. He was arrested many times. He bravely ignored all the offers of the Govt. at various stages. He took active part in organizing Railway workers with famous trade union leader Mirza Ibrahim. As lawyer he got fame by winning cases of very great importance in Pakistan. He has attended many national and international conferences. Recently he is the elected President of Workers Peasants Party of Pakistan since March 2012.

bureaucracy. These problems remained the greatest headache in the province till 1960.[2]

The Religious Leaders Obstacle the Movement

In Pakistan, the period 1947-58, was of backwardness in almost every field of life, with predominantly feudalistic and tribalistic economy. Moreover, religious parties were also the greatest supporters of feudalistic set up in Pakistan, causing further troubles fdor culmination of feudalism.[3]

In this regard, the role of Jamat-e-Islami founded by Moulana Maududi (1903-1979)[4] and Tehrik-e-Talu-e-Islam (Resurgence of Islam) lead by Ghulam Ahmad Pervaiz (1903-1985)[5] is worth mentioning. Leaders of both these religious parties opposed land reforms in their speeches and writing and supported feudalism in the country.

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[2] Interview with I.A Rehman, *Human Rights Commission of Pakistan*, Lahore.IbnAbdurReman was born in 1930 in Haryana in East Punjab. He is a renowned leftwing journalist, writer and Human Rights Activist. Since 1990s he is working as Director of Human Rights Commission of Pakistan in Lahore. He regularly writes in the Daily Dawn on very important humanitarian issues.

[3] Muhammad Naeem Ullah, *Pakistan Jagirdari, Zamindari, Nizam Kay Shakinjay Main*, Lahore, Jamhuary Publication, 2003 pp 232-50. He was born in Dehli in 1931 and migrated to West Punjab. He is an Engineer by profession but he left his profession in search of his research work on feudalism in Pakistan. He has published his work name; PAKISTAN IN THE STRANGLEHOLD OF FEUDALISM which is a real master piece from Marxist point of view.

[4] Maulana Moudodi was a Sunni Muslim theologian, revivalist and political leader and founder of Jamat-e-Islami (1941) the Islamic Revivalist Party in Pakistan.

[5] Ghulam Ahmad Pervaiz was retired as Federal Assistant Secretary from govt. office. He was a close companion of Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948), the founder of Pakistan and Great Admiror of Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), a poet philosopher of Pakistan. He was a famous scholar of Pakistan who declared that Islam is not a religion of rituals and superticious beliefs and wealth are to be equally distributed among every one. He criticized religious leaders as agents of rich peoples. He said that authenticity of Hadith 'the collection of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)' be reviewed upon which many other scholars raised objections over the nature of his claim. He wrote many books and articles on Quranic teachings.

The interesting point is that Moulana Abdul Majid Badayuni a famous Muslim scholar along with 16 other (Muslim religious leaders) and scholars issued a "Fatwa"[6] declaring the "Notes of Dissent" by Muhammad Masood Khadar Poush (1916-1985)[7] as un-Islamic. The fatwa was later distributed throughout the country by Zulifqar Ali Bhuttu (1928-1979) [8]published to win the favours and sympathies of peasants[9] and tenants[10] during the general elections of 1970.[11]

After the partition, the problems of the peasants were neglected by all provincial Governments. The topmost demand of the peasants was the distribution of lands. The land reforms were the crying need of the time particularly in interior Sind and Southern Punjab. The peasants and agricultural laborers were purchased among landlords as a commodity. These landlords had many private prisons to punish the peasants especially in Southern Punjab. The rape of peasant's women by the landlords and the police was a common practice in the province. Punjab has always been a place of small independent villages where people dwelled

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[6] Religious opinion of a certified jurist(Mufti) about the legality of an action under Muslim Law.

[7] Masood Khadar posh, A former Beaurocrate who was appointed as a member of the inquiry commission constituted by Sindh Govt. to look into the problems of Hari's in Sindh. Mr. RajorThomus an English Landlord of Sindh was appointed as president. Mr. M.A Siddiqe a local feudal along with Mr. MasudKhadarposh represented Govt. side. Mr. Masood later on served as deputy commissioner DistrictMuzafarGarh. He drafted a 39 pages *Notes of Dissent*, in the report prepared by the commission which was presented to the Govt. of Sindh. The amazing point is that no representation was given to the Hari's for whom welfare this commission was constituted. Being a Govt. officer Mr. Masood advocated for the Hari's demands.

[8] Former Foreign Minister, President, Civilian Chief Martial Law Administrator, Prime Minister and founder of Pakistan People's Party. He got fame for his socialist political ideas.

[9] Agriculture labour.

[10] Somebody who rents properties for cultivation purpose.

[11] In these elections for the first time after the birth of Pakistan (1947) the people of the country were given the right to vote on one man one vote basis during the reign of a Military dictator Gen. Yahya Khan. The amazing results of these elections proved a turning point in the history of Pakistan and resulted in the separation of East Pakistan under the leadership of Mujeeb-ur-Rehman, the leader of Awami League in 1971.

in their own agrarian way of life in the past. The waters of the five rivers irrigated its fertile lands, providing a stable means of livelihood. However, this prosperity invariably proved to be a liability when peace and tranquility was shattered by arbitrary occupation of lands and pulling out its indigenous masses form their right of land and property. During that time, some brave Punjabis rose and fought for their land.

The Punjab peasantry of the rural area had to face many problems. For achieving their land-rights, the peasants had to struggle hard in the rural Punjab, particularly in Multan, Montgomry (Now Sahiwal), Bahawalpur (former Princely State), D.G. Khan, Shahpur (former District and now a Tehsil of District Sargodha), Gujranwala, Gujrat, Lyllpur (Faisalabad), Lahore, Rawalpindi,CambelPur (Now Attock), Jhang and Mianwali. After the partition, the peasants mobilized struggle for their rights in the whole province. Their demands for social, economic an agrarian freedom was an open secret. The downtrodden peasants of the Punjab wanted to get freedom from the unfair land policies and from the bondage of feudal landlords.[12]

The Punjab Peasant Movement through its component part, the Punjab Kissan Committee, played a remarkable role to free the peasantry from landlords. The district level committees of the rural Punjab launched an organized movement throughout the Punjab. They rebelled against the existing social and economic inequalities and injustices. They wanted to lay the foundations of a new social and economic order for the peasants of Punjab[13]. As

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[12] Interview with Abdul Rauf Malik in 2008 at Peoples Publishing House Kissan Hall, Lahore. He was born in 1926 and joined CPP in early age. When People's Publishing House was established for the publishing of Radical Literature at Lahore, he was appointed its organizer by the leadership of communist party. He was a close companion of syed Sajad Zaheer;founder of communist party of Pakistan. He was arrested many times. He had published many books and wrote many articles against Feudalism. He took active part in many strikes of workers and peasants in the West Punjab. Nowadays he is a director of People's Publishing House. He is the brother of famous left wing writer Abdullah Malik.

[13] Interview with Ch. Fateh Muhammad (May 2008) from 5-Meckloard Road Punjab Kissan Committee Office, Lahore. Ch. Fateh Muhammad is recently settled in UK is a veteran leftwing Marxist Kissan leader and Trade unionist leader of Pakistan. He was born in village Chaherka near Jalander (East Pakistan) in 1925. after partition he settled in Toba Tek Sing near Lyllpur in

a result of the deprivation faced by the rural community of Punjab, the revolutionary movement was bound to start. This process started with the formation of Kissan Committee of Pakistan. This committee was known by the name of Pakistan Kissan Committee. Organized struggle and peasant movement in the rural Punjab received a considerable motivation and support from the classes who were deprived of their basic rights, and were suppressed economically. In this way the PKC got momentum in almost all districts of the province.[14]

In the post independence period, Anti feudal peasant movements got a new momentum. There was wide spread agrarian unrests during 1948-50. However, this unrest did not bring any radical change in the system. The failure of peasant movement was due to the illusion that the peasants wanted the "Islamic Justice" as this slogan had raised by Muslim League during freedom movement. Therefore, they did not make any collective effort and kept on working on regional level. As Kissan Committee in East Bengal, the KissanGirga in NWFP, the KissanSabha in the Punjab and the Harri committee in Sindh were in provinces. As Kissan Movement was regionally organized Govt. could handle them easily.[15]

After independence, during the first six years of the peasant movement, it again had to face severe repression at the hands of the Government. Afraid of the tempo of the growing revolutionary movement, Govt. unleashed repression making the

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the west Punjab. He joined CPP in 1948 and started to organize peasants and workers for the protection their rights. He was arrested many times and kept in various jails and cells. He also contested Punjab Provincial Assembly Elections in 1951. when CPP was outlawed in 1954, he joined Azad Pakistan Party of MianIftikhar-ud-Din. In the period of Ayub Khan first Military Dictator (1958-69) of Pakistan, he had successfully organized Peasant Rights Conferences against Feudalism in Pakistan. In this regard Kissan Conference of 1970 in Toba Tek Sing is worth mentioning which was attended by 3 lakh Peasants and workers from all over the contry. On October 18, 2011, he was awarded Faiz Award in London in recognition of his life long struggle against Feudalism, Imperialism and Militarinism

[14] Ferozud Din Mansoor, Constitution of Kissan committees in the Punjab, Lahore, nd, p 3-11

[15] Interview with HussainNaqi. A veteran leftwing Student Leader, journalist and human right activist recently associated with HRCP Lahore as National Co-coordinator.

functioning of various Kissan Committees impossible. In spite of this the foundation was set in terms of creation of different peasant organizations and their massive support from the masses. Subsequently various Governments were forced to take measures of land reforms such as ceiling legislations, security of tenure and rent reduction, consolidation of holding etc, but all failed to fulfill the declared objectives. On the other hand the period witnessed a large-scale eviction offensive throwing millions of tenants into the position of agricultural workers.

The peasant movement in rural and urban Punjab made a big impact on the masses not only in the Punjab province but also in other provinces. Hundreds of thousands of peasants actually joined the struggle for the peasant's rights in the province for defending their lands and crops.

Peasant movement attained wider popularity in Punjab. Millions of peasants all over the province unleashed an unprecedented struggle with the backing of the communist party of Pakistan for recovering benami land for possession and distribution of surplus lands, for loans in kind and for checking hoarding and black-marketing. In this period, more than three lakh acres of land were taken over and distributed among the landless through village level committees. Many peasants lost their lives in the battles fought on this issue, but it gave a big impetus to the Kissan movement's spread in all districts.[16]

In the Punjab, the peasants conducted a stat-wide movement for agrarian legislation and debt-relief legislation, for the rights on Government lands against threat of central

[16] Recorded Interview with RazaKazim Advocate. He is a famous leftwing political leader in Punjab, born in 1930. He joined Communist Party of Pakistan in at early age in 1948. He took very active part in Railway Workers Trade Union with Mirza Ibrahim. His services in the establishment of Kissan Committee in rural areas of the province are remarkable. He imported many films from Russia to promote cultural relations between two countries. He was arrested many time in factitious cases. In Zia's Military rule (1977-88) he was declared as Master Mind in Attock Conspiracy Case in 1984. It was alleged by the intelligence Agencies that some lower rank officers had made a plan to over through sentenced life lone prison. He is also the founder of the SanjanNaagar Institute of Philosophy and Arts (SIPA) ____A Non-profit organization working in the fields of Philosophy, Music and Philosophy based in Lahore. He has published many articles and pamphlets against Zia dictatorship.

intervention. As a result of the campaign some serious measures from the Government side, in the shape of relief in revenues, and release of lands for the poor peasants or landless farmers were ensured and were distributed among them. The ceiling was revised downwards, many family-based exemptions were withdrawn and hut-dwellers were given rights on land on which they lived. Tens of thousands of agricultural labourers conducted powerful and successful struggle for better wages and living conditions. Peasants from far off places joined the meeting and adopted resolutions for the abolition of Zamindari system without compensation, participation of the local peasant committees in collection of government revenues and procurement of food grains.[17]

First Kissan Conference was organized by Chaudhry Fateh Muhammad, a member of communist party of Pakistan, in Toba Tak Singh in 1948, in Chak 305 J.B. It was attended by thousands of Kissan from all over Punjab. Later on the communist party of Pakistan organized its efforts and from very beginning it had started to make contacts and linkages with its workers all across the country in all provinces (including East Pakistan). They carried out different conferences in Punjab, Sindh and in the Frontier (KPK) province.

Peasants from rural and urban areas of all across the province participated in this conference. It was also decided that the committees should be formed at district levels, so this gave a new dimension to the peasant movement in the Punjab and peasant's organizations/ committees at districts level were formed in different parts of the Punjab. Local peasant organizations organized their efforts against the "Batai" [18]and illegal taxes. Meetings and conferences were arranged to discuss the issue and to decide a concrete frame work for the abolition of these unjustified practices. This proved very significant. It insisted that the share of Betai should be distributed among the landlords and peasants in equal terms and in the fields.

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[17]A report by Ch. Fateh Muhammad, *Pakistan Agriculture Problems and Kissan Movement, in Socialist Party* Publications, No 3, Peshawar, 1975, p.4

[18] Batai is a system of the distribution of the crops at the time of yield its ratio is fixed by the land owners and the farmers in the beginning of sowing season.

During the same period of time, in the wake of volatile situation created by the land reforms, to address the permanent settlement of peasant's the Kissan Committee realized the importance of state of affairs and the role of Kissan Committee. For this reason, on July 14-15, 1952 a meeting of revolutionary peasant workers was convened, under the chairmanship of Syed Amir Hussain MPA from Gujrat continued for two days. A large procession of Kissans was organized by Ghulam Nabi Bhullar president of Azad Pakistan party of Gujranwala.

Following these events, the political struggle among different political parties reached its heights for the upcoming elections. On the other hand the peasantry organization also concentrated their efforts to raise their voices at national level, and was convinced that the upcoming government will definitely bring some new changes for the betterment of peasantry in Pakistan, but the things were not so different from the past.

Initially, the membership was made in two different categories; i.e. collective and individual level. At individual level, the poor and middle class peasants, tenants, laborers and village artisans were subject to the membership of Primary Committee. Every member was directed to fill a form and pay annual subscription. Besides those falling under the above categories, persons representing other classes in special cases were considered for membership. In such cases the membership was valid for one year only. While in the second category- agricultural laborers and middle class Kissans- incorporated in a guild or some other organization were given the membership on payment of one anna per anum.[19]

The organization of the committee in a village in which there were fifteen members a separate village Kissan Committee was set up. But the status of such a committee was not the same as that of primary committee. While there were hundred members, a primary committee may be constituted as Zail Kissan Committee: provided that all members belonged to Zail.[20]If the members were less than a hundred in any one Zail, the Committee would go by the name of Thana Committee. If there were more than a hundred

[19] Ibid, pp 12

[20] It was an administrative unit headed by Zaildar under British rule in the Punjab.

members in any one Tehsil, the committee so constituted would be designated as a Tehsil Committee, a primary committee may comprise of individual or organizational members. Each primary committee used to elect one representative for every 100 members to the General Council of the District committee. The elections would take place at the annual meeting of the Primary committee on dates fixed for the event and were proposed by the Provincial Committee. To maintain the transparency in the elections, the elections were supervised by the two representatives deputed by the District Kissan Committee.[21]

The annual meeting of the General Council of the District committees were held at a specified dates by the provincial committee, in which the Executive committee and the office holders were to be elected in the presence of representative of the Provincial Committee. For every 500 members it would send one representative to the West Pakistan Council. Where there were 500 members, the District Committee would elect 10 representatives.[22]

The process of formation of Kissan Committees was started at a very critical time in the West Punjab. The settlements of refugees and matters of Evacuee property left by the Hindus and the Sikhs created serious troubles while the atrocities of the landlords forced the tenants, workers and peasants to unite themselves for the safeguarding of their rights in the province. The workers and members of communist party took this initiative and started to unite peasants and workers in the province. The constitution of the Punjab kissan provincial committees was drafted by Feroz-ud-Din Mansoor (1903-1959)[23], Abdul Ghani

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[21] Ferozud Din Mansoor, Opit. Cit, p 17-18

[22] Ibid

[23] Ferozuddin Mansur was born in 1903 in Shaikupura, West Punjab. He had to migrate to Afghanistan in the Hijrat Movement in 1920. He received his Revolutionary education and training from Moscow. He worked for Peasants and Workers in various capacities and was arrested many times. He worked with all leftwing parties and groups striving for the rights of workers and peasants. He was among founding fathers of the Communist Party of India. After 1947, he became the first Secretary of Communist Party in West Punjab. He was arrested many times. He was elected General Secretary of Communist Party of Pakistan in 1950. He was the leading theoretician of the CPP. He wrote many articles and pamphlets on various issues. His self criticism report is worth mentioning in which he has

Qureshi[24] and Syed Mutalabi Fareed Abadi[25] on April 4, 1949 at Lahore. The object of the Kissan Committees was to free poor peasants, agriculture labourers, tenants and artisans form political and economic exploitations of feudals, jagirdars[26] and capitalists by forging a common front. According to the constitution all land will be distributed among the tillers and all key industries nationalized. The main objective of this organization was to create free, strong, prosperous and democratic republic of Pakistan, guaranteeing absolute and complete civil liberties.[27] For this purpose a provincial committee under the president ship of Abdul Aziz Qaiser was set up. Muhammad Shareef was appointed its General Secretary and in other areas of the province district committees were formulated.

All these committees in their respective areas organized processions and held meetings throughout the province. In towns and small villages, Kissan cells were established like the district of Multan.[28]

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critically examined the role of CPP and its leadership. He died in 1959. He was deeply disappointed by the beaurocratic attitude of the members of CPP. Inspite of all, he played his role successfully for the promotion of Leftist idealogy till last breath.

[24] He was very famous leader of the communist party of India.

[25] Syed Mutalabi Fareedabadi blonged to a noble family of Faridabad (India). He was born in 1893. He received his early education from Faridabad and Lahore. Later on, he was appointed as Zaildar and Honorary Magistrate. He joined *Tabligh* campaign but soon fed up. He joined Communist Party of India in 1930s. He organized Mewati Peasants against the Maharaja of Alwer state in 1933-34. He also organized trade union and Kissan Committees in the Punjab. He also joined Congress Party. He came in Pakistan in 1948 and played a leading role in Pakistan Socialist Party. He was a pioneer of peasants poetry in Punjab. He authored a drama *Kissan Rutt* in which he depicted operations of Money lenders in Punjab. He also published a poem, *Pin Hari* in which he described the suffering of the peasants. Famous poem *HAYYA HAYYA* soon became the symbolic slogan of all the Kissan agitation in the province of Punjab. He died in 1978.

[26] Big Landlordship established under British colonial rule in India.

[27] Working condition of Agriculture Labor in Punjab, A survey Report, National Commission for Justice and Peace-Catholic Relief Services Pakistan, 2002, p 23.

[28] Sheikh Muhammad Rasheed, *Johd-Musalsal,* Lahore The Jang Publications.

In the provincial elections of 1951 many candidates contested elections on behalf of Kissan committees in almost all districts of the province but failed to win even a single seat due to feudals grip and government repression. However, it could be considered a good attempt in such circumstances on behalf of Kissan committees.

Establishment of Pakistan Kissan Front

After the ban on the Punjab Peasant Movement, the Azad Pakistan Party organized the Kissan movement in Punjab. Kissan front was established in 1955 by the Kissan movement for the immediate solution of the problems of the peasants. All the progressive political parties of the country were invited to participate. Its office was set up in Royal Park Lahore. Weekly "Ekdam" of Mian Muhammad Shafi[29]published various articles highlighting Kissan issues and efforts of Kissan front in the critical period of struggle in Province.

This Kissan Movement in1956 was continued under the banner of the National Jamhauri Party, as a meeting was organized outside the Mochi Gate Lahore. Police reached the spot and encircled peasants since there was a ban on processions under the section 144 in the province. Forty-six leaders of peasants were arrested but they continued their struggle. The Govt. responded positively offering facilities under "Ejected Tenants Scheme" and "Grow More Food Schemes" to the peasants in the province.[30]
The land reforms of 1959 were the culmination of the continued struggles of the peasants in the province during 1947-56.

Struggle and Contribution of Peasant Politics in the Punjab

One of the important features of the peasant organization of the Punjab was the policies which proved to be the symbol of unity of the peasants with the workers. It happened during 1952, when the re-grouping and re-structuring of peasant organizations n the Punjab was going on. Formation of Kissan Committees of Punjab was initiated in this meeting. Later on this committee

[29] A well known political leader of the Punjab. He took active part in the Punjab Politics.

[30] Sheikh Muhammad Rasheed, Opit. Cit. p238

merged with the newly formed Azad Pakistan Party. The period between 1950s and 1960s witnessed the emergence and consolidation of many political groups and economic classes. In agriculture, the hold of the large landowners may not have been broken, but it was certainly shaken enough to allow other economic categories to emerge.[31]

In the decade following the creation of Pakistan, the political power of the very large landlords increased. For example, very large landlords won 80 percent of the seats in the 1951 provincial election in Punjab. At the same time, the economic power of large landlords also increased substantially. In 1950, approximately 6,000 Land owners (who constituted a tiny 0.1 percent) owned 15 percent of all land in Pakistan. At the same time, the poorest 64.4 percent of the population owned another 15 percent, approximately, of all land in Pakistan. In other words, the richest 0.1 percent landlords had as much economic power as the poorest 64.4 percent. The richest 1 percent owned nearly 1/3 of land in Pakistan. In Punjab, fewer than 2,000 Land owners owned approximately 10 percent of the land.[32]

The area of the Punjab was not only the area that became a battle field of peasant struggle for the protection of their rights, the situation in other provinces of the country regarding Peasant Movement was also worth mentioning.

The most important of these struggles was the heroic struggle of the Bengal peasantry against the imposition of the betterment levy tax in the late 50's. This was the most important struggle under the flag of the Kissan Sabha after the epoch-making Telengana struggle. The peasants defied firings, lathi-charges, beatings and all types of repression. The peasant unity forged during the struggle was unparalleled, as the peasants united irrespective of their political affiliations. The movement ultimately forced the Government to withdraw from different unjustified and illegal regulations. These struggles achieved important gains and helped in raising the political consciousness of the peasantry. It was because of these peasant organizations and

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[31] Hafiz Taqi-ud-Din, *Pakistan Ki SiasiJamatainAurTehrikian,* Lahore, The Classic 1995, p 307.

[32] Sheikh Muhammad Rasheed, Opit. Cit. p239

their association held conferences that the movement was able to face serious repression in the shape of mass arrests, injuring of hundreds of poor peasants etc. They fought back the repression and defended their interest.[33]

It was the voice of their hearts as these were the rational demands on the part of peasants and workers. For the realization of these demands, they launched a collective movement in Punjab. The government responded and presented Daultana Report to compensate peasants in Punjab. According to the report, in the province, farming is very common. Approximately more than ¾ agrarian lands are cultivated on the system of division of production (Batai). Generally, the share of tenant is 50%. In real sense, it is not 50% but it was formerly considered to be so.

Feudalism: A Challenge to Peasant Struggle

The state of Pakistan had been controlled by narrow elite. Major stakeholders in the state business, agricultural sector and the industries have been feudal Lords. They played an authoritative role in the affairs of the state. Since 1947, the feudal class had dominance over the provincial and federal Assemblies. It has dominated party politics in the country. The feudal class was extremely conservative, oppressively status-quo-oriented, and, in nearly all cases it was totally resistant to change. At least on the local level, the worst and the most coercive form of feudalism reflected itself in the treatment of tenants, peasants and labor class (low-caste professionals and artisans), women and other dependents.[34] The British were always on the back of the feudals who always supported them in their vested interests. The feudals owed their prominence to the British who had granted land in return for loyalty and support.

In Pakistan, the gap of inequality created by feudalism had badly influenced the political and social systems more than the loyalties to Islam and community. Three types of impacts of feudalism on society are visible in Punjab. Firstly, a large proportion of agricultural population remained remarkably non-

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[33] Abid Hassan Minto, Optic. Cit.

[34] Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan in the 20th Century*, A Political Studies, Oxford 1997, p 20.

political. Secondly, the feudalistic style of politics and power has promoted violence and intolerance in the political culture in Pakistan. Thirdly, because of the dominance of landlords on the politics, the political parties of Pakistan have changed into a one-man show. And the shifting of political loyalties is also the result of the control of landlords on politics.[35] These feudal always opposed land reforms and all other efforts regarding the betterment of the peasants in the Constitutional Assembly of Pakistan and the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab. These feudal have always given a tough time to all those, who voiced for the welfare of peasantry and labor in Pakistan.

The Agrarian Reforms

Pakistan has had a long and varied history of land reforms. Many attempts have been taken without any serious purpose, and most of them failed.[36] The first step in this regard was taken y the Muslim League Government in East Pakistan. The Muslim League passed the East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act in 1950 and with one radical step the ceiling of land holding was fixed at 33 acres only and the tenants were given security of tenure, subletting and absentee landlords were forbidden. The land and water taxes had remained as high as under the British rule. Furthermore, the government levied a tax for the benefit of refugees in the shape of 12.5 percent increase on the land and water taxes[37]. The tax increase was followed by an increase in rents.

The 1950 Punjab Tenancy Amendment & Punjab Protection and Protection of Tenure & rights Ordinance 1950 were enforced in Punjab after the approval of the legislative assemblies. But the government and the landlords lobby started a systematic repression and launched actions against any movement that did not spring from the vital economic needs and desires of the people.[38] During that particular period of time, in early 1950's

[35]Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan in the 20th Century*, A Political Studies, Oxford 1997, p 20.

[36]Zaidi S, Akbar, *Issue in Pakistan's Economy,* Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2000. p 27.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Abid Hassan Minto, Opit. Cit.

provincial governments tried to abolish some of the malinger landlords or rent collectors, but they met little success in this task. On the one hand there was a tendency on the part of the landlords to evict sharecroppers and to take up direct cultivation with wage labour and, on the other, the rich and the better-off middle peasants were trying to increase their cultivated holdings by renting land. The feudalism remained the root cause of Pakistan's malaise; it has appeared in different forms.[39] The landlords by the virtue of their ownership and control of such a vast amounts of land and human resource, were powerful enough to influence the distribution of water, fertilizers, tractor permits and agriculture credit and consequently exercised considerable influence over the revenue, police and judicial administration of the area. The landlords thus, remained the lord or master, such absolute power can easily corrupt, anti is no wonder that the feudal system existed from the century is humanly degrading.[40]

CONCLUSION

In the light of above discussion it can be concluded that the peasants of Punjab joined various activities of the Kissan Movement but it failed because the peasants were not properly organized. They were not class conscious, trained and guided, in a suitable manner. Moreover the feudal Government was bent upon to crush the peasants' movement; therefore the whole machinery as well as the secret agencies were working against this movement. In local areas, the religious heads who depended upon the local Zamindars for their living, during their sermons, advised the workers, peasants and tenets for patience. They openly opposed the movement and land reforms and even issued Fatwas

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[39] Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din speech to the National Assembly of Pakistan on 13 February 1957. He was born in Lahore in a rich Arian family in 1907. He was very active leader of leftwing. He started his political career from the plate from of Congress till 1946 when he joined Muslim League and was offered the portfolio of Federal Minister For Rehabilitation of Refugees. In 1949, he demanded Radical land Reforms in Punjab. Consequently, he resigned from his Ministry and finally he was expelled from party. He established Azad Pakistan Party in 1950. He was also the owner of famous Paper 'The Pakistan Times' which always favoured social justice and Agrarian Reforms in the country. Finally the progressive papers were taken over by Ayub's Military Govt. He died in 1962.

[40] Ibid.

against these. In these circumstances the common peasant did not continue their support for the movement and only a small number of them struggled for their rights. Kissan Movement failed to unite all the sections of working classes into a unified mass movement. Although the movement had a visionary approach having precedents of proved success in various parts of the world, the same could not produce the desired results in Punjab due to weak leadership.